

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-31. (canceled)

32. (new) A method of providing an indication of whether an input name matches a known name, the method comprising:
accessing an input name;
determining multiple phonetic representations for a portion of the input name, each of the multiple phonetic representations being for a different pronunciation of the input name;
comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name to a phonetic representation of a portion of the known name; and
providing an indication of whether the input name matches the known name based on the comparing.

33. (new) The method of claim 32 further comprising:
classifying the input name as belonging to a particular culture;
selecting a rule based on the classifying of the input name; and
applying the rule in determining the multiple phonetic representations for the portion of the input name.

34. (new) The method of claim 32 further comprising:
classifying the input name as belonging to a particular culture;
selecting multiple rules based on the classifying of the input name; and

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applying the multiple rules in determining the multiple phonetic representations for the portion of the input name.

35. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein:

comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name comprises determining articulatory similarity between at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name, and

providing the indication comprises providing an indication of articulatory similarity between the input name and the known name, the indication of articulatory similarity being based on the determining of articulatory similarity.

36. (new) The method of claim 35 further comprising:

identifying an articulatory variation between (i) one or more of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name; and

classifying the articulatory variation as likely or unlikely, and

wherein determining articulatory similarity comprises attributing less significance to the articulatory variation, so as to indicate greater articulatory similarity, if the articulatory variation is likely than if the articulatory variation is unlikely.

37. (new) The method of claim 35 wherein determining articulatory similarity comprises determining articulatory similarity based on a culture-specific rule.

38. (new) The method of claim 35 wherein:

determining articulatory similarity between at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name comprises determining, for the at least one of the multiple phonetic

representations of the portion of the input name, how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding portions of the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name, and
providing the indication of articulatory similarity comprises providing an indication that is based on the determining of how many phonetic features are in common.

39. (new) The method of claim 38 wherein:
the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the input name comprises an International Phonetic Alphabet ("IPA") representation of the input name,
the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name comprises an IPA representation of the portion of the known name, and
determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding portions of the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name comprises determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding symbols from the IPA representation of the portion of the input name and the IPA representation of the portion of the known name.

40. (new) The method of claim 39 wherein determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding symbols from the IPA representation of the portion of the input name and the IPA representation of the portion of the known name is based on a culture-specific rule.

41. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein determining multiple phonetic representations comprises determining multiple representations that are each based on an IPA.

42. (new) The method of claim 32 further comprising comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name to a second phonetic representation of the portion of the known name.

43. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein accessing the input name comprises accessing a character representation of the input name.

44. (new) The method of claim 43 wherein determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule relating character representations to sounds.

45. (new) The method of claim 43 wherein:
the character representation of the input name reflects a spelling from a specific culture,
and
determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule for determining phonetic representations, the rule being based on the specific culture.

46. (new) The method of claim 43 wherein:
the character representation of the input name reflects a spelling from a specific culture,
the input name belongs to another culture that is different from the specific culture, and
determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule for determining phonetic representations, the rule being based on the specific culture.

47. (new) The method of claim 43 wherein:
the character representation of the input name reflects a spelling from a specific culture,
the input name belongs to another culture that is different from the specific culture, and
determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule for determining phonetic representations, the rule being based on the other culture.

48. (new) The method of claim 43 wherein:
the character representation of the input name reflects a spelling from a specific culture,
the input name belongs to the specific culture, and

determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule for determining phonetic representations, the rule being based on the specific culture.

49. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein providing the indication comprises providing an indication that the input name exactly matches the known name.

50. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein providing the indication comprises providing an indication that the input name does not exactly match the known name.

51. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name comprises comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name, corresponding parts of (i) the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name.

52. (new) The method of claim 51 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a syntactic level

53. (new) The method of claim 51 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a syllabic level.

54. (new) The method of claim 53 wherein the parts that correspond at the syllabic level include (i) a first part that relates to a left-most syllable of the portion of the input name and (ii) a second part that relates to a left-most syllable of the portion of the known name.

55. (new) The method of claim 54 wherein:

the first part further relates to both an initial phonologic element and a final phonologic element of the left-most syllable of the portion of the input name, and

the second part further relates to an initial phonologic element and a final phonologic element of the left-most syllable of the portion of the known name.

56. (new) The method of claim 55 further comprising:
producing a result from the comparing of the first part and the second part; and
determining, based on the result, whether to continue comparing the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name.

57. (new) The method of claim 51 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a morphologic level.

58. (new) The method of claim 51 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a phonologic level.

59. (new) The method of claim 58 wherein the parts that correspond at the phonologic level include (i) a first part that relates to a final phoneme of the portion of the input name and (ii) a second part that relates to a final phoneme of the portion of the known name.

60. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name comprises comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name, sonority level between at least part of (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name.

61. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein providing the indication of whether the input name matches the known name comprises providing a rank-ordered list of names, with rank-order indicating a likelihood of matching the input name.

62. (new) The method of claim 61 wherein providing the rank-ordered list of names comprises ranking names on the rank-ordered list based on a degree of articulatory similarity between names on the rank-ordered list and the input name.

63. (new) The method of claim 61 wherein the rank-ordered list of names includes the known name.

64. (new) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises: comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name, sonority level between at least part of (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name, and basing rank-order of the known name on the comparing of sonority level.

65. (new) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises: determining whether the known name includes a morphological element, and basing rank-order of the known name on whether the known name includes a morphological element.

66. (new) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises: comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name, (i) an initial sound of the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and (ii) an initial sound of the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name, and

basing rank-order of the known name on the comparing of initial sounds.

67. (new) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises: comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name, syllabic structure of (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name, and

basing rank-order of the known name on the comparing of syllabic structure.

68. (new) The method of claim 67 wherein comparing syllabic structure comprises comparing syllabic similarity.

69. (new) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises: comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name, location of stress in (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name, and

basing rank-order of the known name on the comparing of location of stress.

70. (new) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises: comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name, orthographic similarity between (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name, and

basing rank-order of the known name on the comparing of orthographic similarity.

71. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of

the known name comprises discounting, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name, an occurrence of a likely articulatory variation between the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the known name.

72. (new) The method of claim 32 further comprising:
identifying a particle in the input name; and
attributing less significance to the particle, than to another part of the input name, in providing the indication of whether the input name matches the known name.

73. (new) The method of claim 72 wherein attributing less significance to the particle comprises deciding not to determine a phonetic representation of the particle.

74. (new) The method of claim 72 wherein attributing less significance to the particle comprises deciding not to compare a phonetic representation of the particle to a phonetic representation of a part of the known name.

75. (new) The method of claim 72 wherein identifying a particle comprises identifying a title, affix, or qualifier as the particle.

76. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein accessing an input name comprises accessing a portion of a complete name.

77. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein the portion of the input name comprises the entire input name.